

REMARKS

This reply is submitted in response to the Office Action dated March 21, 2006. Claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 15-19 are amended, and claims 2 and 11 are canceled without prejudice, as noted above. Claims 3, 12, and 13 are amended to correct their dependencies, and claims 5, 8, 12, 15, 16 and 19 are amended to correct typographical errors. The amendments above and the remarks that follow address the points raised in the Office Action and, thereby are believed to place this application in condition for allowance.

Allowable Claims

Applicants note with appreciation the allowability of claims 17-19.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 2-4, 6-9, and 11-16 would also be allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of their respective base claims. As claims 2 and 11 depend on claims 1 and 10, respectively, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 2, and claim 10 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 11. Claims 2 and 11 have been canceled. Thus, claims 1 and 10 should now be in condition for allowance. Further, as claims 3-9 depend on claim 1, and claims 12-16 depend on claim 10, they are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner states that the copies of the foreign and non-patent references cited in the IDS filed on June 13, 2002 are illegible, and thus do not comply with 37 CFR §1.98(a)(2). In response, Applicants submit copies of those references with this response. For the Examiner's convenience, Applicants have submitted a new SB/08 form listing the requested references.

Applicants note that previously cited German Patent No. 18741567 appears to have been erroneously cited in the previously-filed IDS (Applicants are not able to find a German patent with this number). Applicants cite German Patent No. 19841578 in its place in the attached supplemental IDS.

Specification

The Examiner has objected to the specification because of a number of informalities. Specifically, the Examiner indicates that the term “process” should be changed to “processor” and the term “processes” should be changed to “processors.” Applicants respectfully submit that the terms “process” and “processes” are used correctly throughout the specification, including the claims. Thus, the specification has not been amended.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-19 are objected to because of a number of informalities. The informalities in claims 1, 10, 17, and 18 have been corrected in the amendments to the claims, as noted above.

Regarding the objection to the terms “process” and “processes” in claims 1-19, Applicants respectfully submit that these terms are used correctly, and thus have not been amended.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 5, and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,576,715 of Litton et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,812,843 of Yamazaki et al. Without acquiescing to the Examiner’s rejections, in order to expedite the prosecution of the present application, claims 1 and 10 are amended as indicated above to include the features of allowable claims 2 and 10, respectively. Hence, these claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Further, claim 5, as amended, depends on claim 1, and hence should also be in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention is in condition for allowance. Applicant therefore kindly requests reconsideration and allowance of the pending application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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